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BELIEF AND LIFE

STUDIES IN THE THOUGHT OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

BY

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1917

TO
MY STUDENTS

FOREWORD

THIS little volume consists of eight short studies on subjects characteristic of the thought of the Fourth Gospel. They do not in any sense constitute an exposition of the teaching of the Gospel, nor do they raise the many critical questions connected with it. The present writer believes that the Gospel represents the witness of John the son of Zebedee to Jesus Christ as communicated to and set down by a disciple or disciples of His. It is thus at least two removes from the actual life and teaching of our Lord, but in spite of that it very frequently preserves the authentic note. Though the words are often those of the beloved disciple,

Foreword

or his reporter, the ideas are as often those of the Master. In its presentation of the work of Jesus Christ, and His relations both with God and men, it conveys a message that is as needed in these days as when it was fresh delivered. The aim of this book is to set forth some aspects of this message in modern terms.

W. B. SELBIE.

OXFORD, *August 1916.*

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THE FOURTH GOSPEL is the work of one . . . who had long been conscious, we may be sure, of the presence of the Paraclete within him, guiding him into all truth . . . not perhaps without some admixture of ancestral disdain for the materialistic superstition of the masses, both of believers and unbelievers. And now in his old age, when the popular expectations had proved false . . . he finds himself confronted by new dangers from the other side. Other thinkers, more spiritual (as they would consider) than he, are saying that the Son of God was not a real man at all, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. This to the Evangelist was the greatest error : to deny the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh was the doctrine of Antichrist. The Fourth Gospel is written to prove the reality of Jesus Christ. But the Evangelist was no historian : ideas, not events, were to him the true realities, and if we go to his work to learn the course of events we shall only be disappointed in our search.

Prof. F. C. BURKITT
In *The Gospel History and its Transmission*.

BELIEF AND LIFE

I

THE LIVING WORD

(John i. 1, 14)

THE main purpose which the writer of the Fourth Gospel had in view was to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And he seeks to do this not so much by argument as by illustration. He suffers Jesus to speak for Himself, and become, as it were, His own apology. Only in selecting incidents and discourses to record, he does so with the one object that they shall show forth the divine glory of his Master. And the same purpose appears in the introduction or prologue which occupies the first eighteen verses of the Gospel. There the writer gives a bird's-

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eye view of his whole theme. He sums up in a few short sentences the meaning and purpose of the life of Christ, from the point of view of the place it may be supposed to hold in the Divine order. He intimates that it is no ordinary biography that he is about to write. There is an aim behind it all, a meaning within it, and an end to be served by it, that lift it on to a plane by itself, and cause us to see in it the form and manifestation of the Divine Will.

And so for a moment the evangelist goes back to the beginning of things. He brings before us a being whom he calls "The Word," who was God, and was with God, and through whom God wrought. And he would have us understand that in the birth of Jesus Christ the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among men.

I. THE WORD.

Now it is important to note here that St. John uses this term "Word" as one

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which would be familiar to his readers. He makes no apology for it, and gives no stated definition of its meaning. We must regard it, therefore, as being not a mere catchword of the philosophical schools, but a term which would be fairly well understood in those Jewish and Hellenistic circles to which the writer appealed. Indeed we need not go further than the New Testament itself in order to understand this. As soon as Jewish religion reached a reflective stage men were faced with the difficulty of intelligently apprehending an invisible, infinite, and eternal God. It was necessary in some way to relate Him to mankind, to bridge over the chasm between His infinite nature and the lowness of men. Men cried aloud for a mediator to open up for them the way to the Divine. And the needed link was sometimes found in what was called, even in the earliest times, "the Word of God." The name itself is significant, and is its own interpreter. A man's word is that by which he expresses himself, and communicates with other men. It is

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not himself but proceeds from him and is part of him, and is his legitimate revelation and expression. So "the Word of God" is God's life and will in active expression. It is with God from the beginning, and through it God acts. Between Him as creative author on the one hand and His works on the other, "the Word" stands, the expression of His inmost nature and of His divine power. And so St. John, turning from the wondrous manifestation of God in Christ to discover its source and history, finds it naturally enough in this ancient conception of "the Word," which thus becomes the bridge of connection between Jewish monotheism and the Christian trinity.

And the meaning has its own use and attraction for us, in spite of the difficulties which lie on the surface. We are driven by the same necessity that compelled these ancient writers; we too have to give a reason for the faith that is in us. The moment we come to look on Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, and see in

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Him an object of worship and the Lord and Master of our lives—we are bound to ask ourselves as to the mystery of His being, as to His place in the Divine order. If He is to us God blessed for ever, we cannot conceive of a time when He was not. His coming among men in the form of a man will be but a single incident in a vast career. The Incarnation of the Word is not a mere Divine afterthought, a chance expedient made necessary by an unexpected course of events in the world ; it was part of the Divine economy from the beginning. His coming was the fulfilment of an age-long purpose. If we are to give to Christ the place He claims in our thought and reverence, we must see Him as with God from the beginning, and find in Him the agent of the Divine life. By Him all things were made, “ the atoms which we call ultimate ; the myriad modes and forms and fashions into which the atoms are transmuted and built up ; heat and light and electricity ; the world of colour and the world of sound ; the courses of the stars, the strength of

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mountains, the raiment of lilies, the beauty and wonder of bird and insect life, the uncouth animals, the mind of man"; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him, too, was life. This universe, the garment we see God by, is a manifestation of the Divine Word, God making Himself known, unfolding His glory in the light of His love, as the flower unveils itself before the sunshine of spring. And He did not leave Himself without witness. The Word of God had breath in many a saint and seer of old. Away on the dim confines of history we read of men to whom He spake with authority, and to whom a message came as from God. The religions of the world speak to His work, though with confused, discordant voices. All the intellectual advance which men have made, the slow discoveries of science, the development of art, the passion of the race for larger life and fuller liberty, are manifestations of the Divine Word and speak of His coming among men, who was with God from the beginning, and by whom were all

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things made. And in turning our thoughts to Him as to the pre-existent Christ, whose place in history stretches far beyond His life in Palestine, St. John is but answering the lawful demands of our intelligence, and establishing our faith upon a foundation that will endure.

2. THE INCARNATION.

But at last, in the fullness of the times, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." All other revelation of God to men, in whatever form it was given, was but preparatory to this final and perfect outshining of the Divine light and outpouring of the Divine love. At the birth of Jesus Christ the tabernacle of our flesh received a new inmate, one greater and more glorious than had been known before. It was the culmination of the Divine purpose from the beginning, and through it Christ becomes at once the centre of history and the focus of revelation. To realise this we must stand where the first disciples

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did. They came from contemplating the life and deeds and words of Jesus Christ to seek an explanation of them, to understand their meaning and purpose. And they could only find what they sought as they raised Jesus to the throne of the universe, and saw in Him the fulfilment of God's infinite design. Their idea of the Incarnation is not derived from curious thinkers, either Jewish or Greek; it is not the outcome of their philosophy, whatever that may have been; it is an historical postulate. It is not something that they invented; it happened, and it had to be explained. As has been said: "Here as in all cases, philosophy is the interpreter of history; it never has been, it never can be, its creator." The prologue of this Fourth Gospel is an anticipation of the history that follows; the history is the commentary on the prologue. St. John is an idealist; but the ideal of which he here speaks has had its counterpart in a reality which he has seen and known. To him it is an easy and natural thing that

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the Jesus of history should become the Christ of faith.

But to turn now from St. John to ourselves. We need to see more clearly yet the bearing of the doctrine of the Word that became flesh upon our own thought and life. Shall we say then, for one thing, that we have here God's complete, highest, and final revelation of Himself, and that therefore it is moral and spiritual rather than material in its expression. The Incarnation is God's answer to man's long search after Him ; an answer that becomes more intelligible the farther we advance in spiritual understanding. It is true indeed that we often seek to go beyond Christ. We are not content with the revelation of God in Him, but look for one more after the devices and desires of our own hearts, in which we may discern unmistakably the power and glory which we conceive as Divine. We fail to see that the lowly Jesus, living as a man among men, emptying Himself of all Divine prerogative, and obedient even unto death, is a worthy repre-

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sentative of the eternal God. We must remember that revelation depends upon man's power to see; and but a little reflection will convince us that no startling display of superhuman might, no dazzling vision of physical splendour, could ever have produced half the effect that has come from the meek and quiet testimony of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, God does not reveal Himself in any crushing or overpowering manifestation of physical force as He does in the even tenor of a quiet human life. He is not in earthquake, or thunder, or rushing wind, or fire, but in a still small voice. Much as we may be repelled by the outward humiliation of the life of Jesus Christ, it needs only a very little insight to show us that there is here a diviner thing than any earthly glory or material force. The revelation in Jesus Christ was a revelation to men, and therefore He came as a man. It is not that God created an ideal supernatural person—a superman—untouched by the feeling of our infirmities, raised above our weakness and pain, feeling

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for us perhaps, but not feeling with us. In such a one there would have been no revelation that men could use or understand. We mean something else, something far higher, when we say: "The Word was made flesh." There is the Divine personality with God from the beginning, the expression of His power, the manifestation of His will. And He takes to Himself human form—a life, a mind, a person like ours, perfect in the sense of being perfectly human, not of an inhuman or monstrous kind. But through the earthly tabernacle the heavenly light shines. He stands confessed a God, by a goodness which puts all the goodness of the world to shame, by a purity that sullies that of men, as snow shows whitest linen dark beside it. Look where we will, we can find no more perfect type of God than in the sublime moral personality of Jesus Christ.

And here begin the lessons of the Incarnation for us. In Christ God is revealed, and from Him man takes, for all time, his idea of the Divine. God seems a long way

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off when we have to look for Him in heaven. It surely brings Him nearer when we see Him by our side toiling and suffering as we have to toil and suffer. The life of Jesus Christ is an accomplished fact in the history of the Divine, and we can never go back upon the knowledge that the Eternal Himself has taken our form, shared our experience, borne our sicknesses, suffered for our sins, and has done so not merely to show forth His glory and demonstrate His superiority, but that we might live His life and be partakers of His joy. The eternal indwelling of God in the natural universe is a truth that has been accepted by many devout minds, but never had it been conceived in so lofty, inspiring, and comforting a form as in the Christ of this Gospel. There the Divine and the human are in close organic connection. God with us, "the Word made flesh," in the person of Jesus Christ teaches a lesson of Divine sympathy with man which no theories or doctrines could ever bring home to our hearts. There

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“Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.”

Men and women whom no arguments would convince, and who could comprehend no dogmas, can follow the Apostle when he shows them in the life of Jesus Christ, as he knew it, One who was at once human and Divine, “the Word made flesh.”

3. THE UNVEILING OF LOVE.

And so from the Incarnation itself, with all its revelation of the nature of God, we turn to the purpose behind it, and see the answer to the old question, “Cur Deus Homo,” “Why God became man,” in a love that transcends all our earthly affections. In Jesus Christ, with His life among men and His sacrifice for men, we see the love of God for the world. And knowledge of this love is the only true guide to the meaning of the Incarnation. For it is not enough that we have revealed to us the fact that

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God is with man. Contact is not communion. "The Word made flesh" brings God to our very doors, but does not unite us with Him. Such communion is only possible through love. Now, as St. John himself tells us, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Incarnation is the manifestation, not of God's power or justice, but of His love. In "the Word made flesh, and dwelling among us, full of grace and truth," we have the expression of what has been the mind of God to the world from the beginning. We see there, in the life and character of Jesus Christ, written in indelible lines, the deep, strong yearning of God for the human race, His overmastering desire that men should not perish but have everlasting life. It is no mere accident that this evangelist, who dwells so fully on the eternal glory of the Christ, on His pre-existence, and presence with the Father for all time, should dwell also with the same insistence upon His

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love. Indeed, the two things go together. It is not only that the story of Christ's love makes it less difficult to comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of His revelation, but we read His love also in the knowledge of His power, for it shows us the Father's heart and mind from the beginning when we realise that He is "the Word made flesh." And it needed the love of God in Christ to awaken our love for Him in return. Only in love for God do we truly find Him. In loving us God appeals to our whole personality. Love alone is the function of the whole man, and when God loves us and we love Him, communion between us is complete. This is the sum and substance of the revelation in Christ. His love begets our sincere affection, which becomes for us the door to the Divine heart and mind. You may speculate about God never so subtly, and yet you may fail to come near Him. "You must love Him, ere to you He shall seem worthy of your love." Learn to love Him, and you know Him at once. And as you

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behold Him in Jesus Christ, living among men and dying for them, touched into rarest compassion by their needs, and filling them with new life and better hopes by the example of His holiness, you find in Him one whom having not seen you love, and you have some glimmering of a solution of the “mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Christ Jesus: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

And so perhaps we may be able to see that this teaching of the Fourth Gospel about “the Word with God, and the Word was God,” and “the Word made flesh,” is not a mere spinning of intellectual cob-webs, but has some real bearing on Christian life. The form of it may be likely to repel rather than attract and convince. But we too have faith, and if we are wise

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we shall give a reason for it. We believe in Jesus Christ; we have seen Him as pictured in the Gospels; we have been caught by the loveliness of His character; and under the warmth of His love our better self has revived. He is an influence for good in our lives, the strength and reality of which we cannot ignore. We admit probably that He is a revelation from God, and that we can speak of Him truly in no other way. And here we are brought just to the point at which St. John found himself, and are constrained to do as he did. We become unconsciously theologians. We cannot rest in the simple following of Jesus Christ, in doing His will, in trying to be like Him. We cannot but ask why? Who is He that His will should become the law of a man's life, that He should so strangely affect our character and attract our love? And once we start on this quest, we do not know that we shall reach any satisfactory goal unless we follow the way which St. John has cut out for us. Men have tried to find a place and a reason for

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Christ, short of confessing His Divinity in the full sense in which this Gospel sets it before us ; but they have never succeeded in satisfying either mind or conscience in so doing. It may be hard for us to accept St. John's position, if we approach it simply as a theological discussion or intellectual problem. But if we come to it from a direct experience of Jesus Christ, we shall find in it a solution of questions which have forced themselves upon us. If we take towards Him the attitude which the evangelist took, His claim seems justified. In doing His will, sharing His ideals, and thinking His thoughts after Him, we come to understand how He can be to men the very Word of God.

“God may have other words for other worlds,
But for this world the word of God is Christ.”

II

KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

(John vii. 17)

THESE words are among the deep sayings of Jesus Christ. He came into the world to reveal God to man, to teach religion, and to show men the way of life. But men were blind and could not understand the beauty and truth of His teaching. Though He spake to them with authority they would not hear. The Jews marvelled at His wisdom but could not conceive how He had attained it. He told them, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." He had a spiritual knowledge, and it came to Him not by learning, but by insight into the will of God.

Here, then, is the principle of all religious knowledge. The quest for the knowledge

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of God still rouses the most eager efforts of men. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him," are words which have an echo in every heart. Even those who have abandoned the search in despair and have concluded that the best knowledge of God is to say that we know Him not, are ready to listen to those who profess to teach the deep things of God. But men in these days are beginning to understand that the knowledge of God is not to be attained merely by methods of observation and study. We live in a scientific age. The progress of science has lighted up the whole world, and religion cannot ignore it. It has changed our conception of the Bible and of the history of religion. Biblical criticism, the historical method, and the science of comparative religion are legitimate and useful studies. But they can only give us teaching about God, and not the knowledge of God Himself. For it is possible to know much about God and His works, but not to know Him. The Pharisees knew the laws of God, but they were blind and unable to see the

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glory of the Father in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus spake these words and bade them do the will of God that they might know the teaching.

I. THE NEED OF SYMPATHY.

Thus the knowledge of God, according to Jesus Christ, does not come by study but by sympathy. To know a friend is not to know his history, and his ancestry, and his habits, but to have a fellow-feeling with the man himself. There must be a certain likeness of nature, and identity of interest, and sympathy of soul, before a man can be truly known. So it is with God. Study and investigation show us but the outskirts of His ways. There must be a certain moral sympathy with Him before He can be fully known. There is an old saying that the heart makes the theologian, or in more modern speech, "It is the fundamentally ethical quality in man on which Christ seizes as the organon for gaining a true knowledge of God." There is a real

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distinction between religious and scientific knowledge, but the one may be as sound and trustworthy as the other. Truth about God comes to men by processes as valid as those which result in any scientific formula. It has its foundation in experience, an experience to which modern psychology is teaching us to attach an ever-increasing importance. It is impossible to describe God in fixed terms as you can the properties of air and water. But to the religious man the words "God is love" convey as much as a chemical formula does to the scientist, and for him are equally true. But the criterion of truth is necessarily different in both cases. As Prof. Paulsen says, "The final and highest truths—the truths by which and for which a man lives and dies—do not rest upon scientific knowledge but have their origin in the heart, in the essential principle of the will." This principle is universal and belongs to all men. Therefore, when Jesus Christ bade men do the will of God in order that they might know of the teaching, He was not evading the

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issue, but laying down a natural law of the religious life and consciousness. He calls men to do His will, to follow Him, and He proclaims Himself as the way to the Father. To the soul that cries, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," He opens the plain path of the duty that lies nearest, and bids it seek God by service and sacrifice and the life of holy love.

The method of Jesus is thus the strictly scientific method of the hypothesis. Every scientific truth is first an assumption which a man puts to the test of experience and proves by taking it for granted. So if you would know God you must take Him for granted and walk in His light until the day dawns and the shadows flee away. This explains why spiritual knowledge is so real, and the grasp of religious truth so possible, to people who are altogether illiterate. These can at least do the will of God as they know it, and strive to walk in His ways, and the experience they gain thereby brings them ever nearer to Him who is the truth. This is why the knowledge

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of God is often hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes. It is only a humble and childlike spirit that will suffer a man to take Christ at His word and submit his will to the daily practical guidance of the will of God. Here is the bond of union between all true believers.

2. ITS PRACTICAL CHARACTER.

The subject becomes clearer when we remember that Jesus Christ did not leave men in any doubt as to what the will of God might mean. His ethical teaching has too often been regarded by the Christian Church as a mere ideal and as unsuited to the necessities of daily life. It was not so to Jesus Christ Himself. His spirit was intensely practical, and there is no doubt that He meant men to fulfil the demands which He laid upon them. This does not mean that we must put a literal interpretation upon all His words. He spoke figuratively, but behind all the images He used were definite principles on which He

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would have men act. The great aim of His teaching was the building up of Christian character. But the attainment of this character was not an end in itself. Men were to be pure in heart that they might see God. So He required of men faith rather than knowledge, or as a means to knowledge. They were to trust God by walking in His ways in order that they might know Him. Faith is thus an active principle in the religious life, and the end of it is a clean heart and life, and a deeper and fuller acquaintance with the Divine. Religious experience, according to Jesus, is not a product of mysticism or sentiment. It is a severely practical thing. It means the denial of self for the ends of God's kingdom ; the renunciation of this world to win a better ; the taking up of the cross after Christ ; the discipline of the soul and the quickening of the moral sense. So to Jesus the ethical in religion is always prior to the intellectual. The sin of unbelief consists not in wrong opinions, but in irreverence, unteachableness, and satisfac-

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tion with oneself. Christian character results in, and does not follow from, the Christian creed.

It is important to remember, further, that the doing of God's will does not necessarily involve any high achievements or any heroic measures. When Jesus bade men "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," He was no doubt bidding them start on a very high enterprise. But the quest of it was to begin low down in the region of daily service and discipline. The maxim, "Do the duty that lies nearest thee," is truly Christian; and the beauty of the ethics of Jesus lies in the fact that they begin with the common round and daily task and lead men into larger fields. The disciple of Jesus is like the soldier on active service who is so occupied with routine and details that he has scarcely any recognition of the fact that he is under the command of a great general and playing his part in a vast campaign. Yet it is the glory of Christianity to teach men to do the commonest duties as unto the Lord. The

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Christian life toils on through valleys and low-lying places, but its face is set to the hills. As a modern teacher has said : " It moves from small moral matters up to large religious ones. The road up is man's natural path. It may see in the little the large, and may look through the finite limited duty into the friendly face of the Eternal."

"Who sweeps a room as to Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine."

Thus the way to God lies along the steep and lonely path of duty ; by that way alone can men attain to the heavenly vision and to the peace which passeth understanding. " Turn to the right and keep straight on," said a great bishop once to one who asked him to put religion into a sentence. And the maxim is a good one. The light of the knowledge of God comes slowly, and there are many difficulties and hindrances to be faced, but it is at least something to know that we have our faces set in the right direction. Frederick Robertson put this

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truth into memorable words when he said : “ It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all. In that fearful loneliness of spirit—I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless : it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand simple landmarks of morality. . . . If there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Thrice blessed is he who—when all is drear and cheerless—has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed because his night shall pass into clear bright day.” “ He that willeth to do His will shall know of the teaching.”

3. THE POWER OF WILL.

Once more, it is important to notice that the appeal of Jesus Christ here is not to the

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emotions but to the will. Sentiment plays so large a part in religion that we are apt to forget that in Christian teaching the chief stress is laid on the will. The true sequence is obedience first, then knowledge, and obedience is an affair of the will. This is entirely in accordance with the findings of modern psychology, which teaches us that "The willing department of our nature dominates both the conceiving department and the feeling department."

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

Those who have studied the pathology of souls are fully aware of the fact that a most serious symptom is the loss of will power which comes through a long persistence in evil. Christianity does not merely say to the sinner, "Be good," but brings to him the promise of power. To multitudes of men and women Christ means and has meant a reinforcement of the will power such as alone can give them the means of throwing off ingrained habit and of asserting

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their truer selves. Jesus asks His followers for something more than mere assent to His words. He asks them for devotion to His ideals and consecration to His service, and for an obedience which is the highest form of faith. Men are not to be persuaded of the truth of Christianity by arguments, they have to prove it for themselves by becoming dedicated spirits. No doubt this is much to ask, but it is only what every teacher asks of his pupils—that they should put themselves into his hands and follow his methods that they may learn what he has to teach. It will be an immense gain when the Christian Church comes fully to understand that the method of Jesus is moral and practical rather than intellectual or sentimental. With Him character is the first thing, and the roots of character are in the will. Thus His appeal to all perplexed and doubting souls is that they approach the great problems of life and destiny along the simple road of duty and of ethics. By taking Him as our guide thus far, we can feel our way gradually towards

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that larger knowledge which He has to give.

4. A BASIS OF UNITY.

Here too we have the real basis of Christian unity. With regard to the intellectual expression of religion there must always be difference of opinion, and human nature being what it is, it is well that such differences should exist. But in matters of conduct and character there is no room for wide diversities. We can all recognise goodness when we see it, and goodness is the same for all. It is often said that the truest Christian unity is to be found in the mission field, where Christian churches are constrained to forget their differences when they come to face their common foe. So at home they should find a like principle of union in the effort to maintain the ethical ideal, and to get the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven. We can all sing the same hymns because they express, as a rule, the ethical and spiritual rather than the dogmatic side of our religion. There is

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a camaraderie among saints which no differences of opinion can altogether obscure, and our first business as Christians is to be saints in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore strive, one and all, to do the will of God more perfectly, that we may come to know more of His mind, and that we may help to establish the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The law here stated is universal in its application. The knowledge of God is possible to all men. It is not the possession of the select few, of the learned or of the privileged. He has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. If the way to religious knowledge were by argument and study, but few would be able to attain it. To be pure in heart is possible to all who have the will, and therefore all may see God. Just as it is possible to get into touch with the spirit of a great master of painting or of music by perpetually copying his work, so by the imitation of Christ it is possible to enter into His mind and to know His teaching. The experiment is one that all

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have to make for themselves. It may be faultily made, for it is no impossible perfection that Jesus demands, but if there is the good will behind it, it will not be without results. To all those who truly seek Him and are perplexed by doubts and failures He points out the road of service, self-sacrifice, and holiness. It is a great thing that the divers thoughts of men should be expressed in one tongue which all can understand. So there is a moral esperanto, a language of the soul which is the same for all—the language of good deeds and a holy life. This alone can bring about that unity amid diversity which should be the hope and prayer of every true follower of Christ.

III

THE SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP

(John x. 11)

IT has often been pointed out that in this tenth chapter of the Gospel there are three distinct parables in which Jesus represents Himself as having the same relation to men that a shepherd has to his sheep. Originally, no doubt, each of these parables was spoken separately, and could easily be distinguished from the others. In the narrative before us, however, they have been combined under one heading, and give the general substance of the teaching of Jesus as to His shepherding of men. It is quite easy, however, to divide the discourse into its various parts, and to distinguish the sequence of thought in the whole. In order to interpret the parable we have to try and

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picture to ourselves the familiar everyday life of an Eastern shepherd.

The first scene is laid in the early morning, when the shepherd comes to lead his flock out of the enclosure in which they have been folded for the night to the broad pasture-lands. It was the practice for many different flocks, belonging to various owners, to be gathered into one fold with one porter at the door. Each flock knew its own shepherd, and was accustomed to answer his voice. When he called, the porter opened the door. Thus the true shepherd could be distinguished from those who were thieves.

The second scene is laid at midday. Here Jesus represents Himself as the door of the sheep. He was thinking of the smaller folds set in the midst of pasture-lands, with wide swinging doors, through which sheep might pass as they liked, to find rest and shelter in the midday heat. So Christ is to His own an open door to rest and security. In Him they find their peace, and through Him they pass out into wide fields of thought and service.

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With the third scene the evening shadows are falling, and the shepherd begins to lead his flock to the night-fold. The way is long and often dangerous ; hungry wolves lie in wait and spring out on the flock unawares. The mere hireling flees, but the good shepherd stands his ground, casts himself between his flock and their fierce assailants, and gives his life for his sheep.

The picture thus sketched is a beautiful one, true to life in the smallest details, and must have appealed irresistibly to the imaginations of those for whom it was first drawn. But it was more than a mere fancy picture of possible circumstances. For the evangelist it was a real revelation of Jesus Himself, a very definite unveiling of His heart and mind to men. Men have accepted it as it was offered, and found in it a gracious and satisfying expression of the Divine love and care. And it may help us a little better to grasp the actual bearing of the revelation if we realise the conditions under which it was made known.

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There is no definite break between these ninth and tenth chapters. Jesus is represented as having still in mind the blind beggar whose eyes He had opened, and who had been turned out of the synagogue because he believed on Him. To the poor man this action on the part of the authorities would seem the culminating misfortune of his life, worse even than his previous blindness. The act of excommunication would not be suffered to remain a dead-letter. The man was cut off from the commonwealth of Israel, from the help of those to whom he had looked as spiritual guides, and from any further chance of a hopeful and godly life. And it was the action of these false shepherds, the Pharisees, which led Jesus to declare Himself as the good shepherd—the door, the life, the saviour of the sheep. They were but hirelings, and exploited the flock in their own interests; He lives for the sheep, devotes Himself to their welfare, gives Himself for them. It is thus a fresh aspect of the relation between Christ and humanity which is opened up

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to us under this figure of the good shepherd. In this Gospel He has already been revealed as the life, the food, the drink, the light of the world. We have now to see how He becomes the guide, protector, and deliverer of men.

I. HUMAN NEED.

In speaking of Himself as the good shepherd, Jesus implies a need on the part of men. Without Him they are as sheep without a shepherd, forlorn, helpless, wandering, an easy prey to enemies. But this is an assumption which men generally regard as requiring proof. They admit the beauty and helpfulness of Christ's declaration, but they fail to apply it to themselves. It is curious how, even in the history of Christendom, art and poetry and rhetoric have combined to limit the shepherd's office of Jesus to little children, as though there were something childish in the whole idea, something unworthy of the freedom and independence of grown

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men and women. A Japanese student who once heard a sermon on this text dismissed it with the remark, "I like not to be called a sheep." And in these go-ahead days, when every man is for himself and has to carve out his own path, the need of shepherding is not obvious, and the mere statement of it is apt to excite feelings of superiority and contempt. In the old days perhaps, when the world was young and man was ignorant, it was all very well. Then men felt themselves to be the sport of circumstances and destiny. They were in the hands of forces they did not understand, and at the mercy of powers over which they had no control, and it was natural that they should look wistfully enough for help outside. But now it is very different. Man has proved himself to be the master of circumstances and the lord of Nature. Forces before which he once trembled he now holds in the hollow of his hand. He has tamed the lightning to do his bidding; wrested her secrets from the bosom of the earth; conquered the elements and almost annihilated

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space. He has won great and lasting victories, and it is no wonder that his new-gotten power should have turned his head, and persuaded him that he is monarch of all he surveys. He sings with the modern poet :

“How good is man’s life, the mere living,
How fit to employ
All the heart and soul and senses for ever in joy.”

And he submits, with some show of reason, that it is nothing less than ridiculous to compare him, with all his vast achievement, to silly sheep needing a shepherd. And yet even modern man with all his perfect equipment has his limitations, and is sometimes brought sharply up to recognise them. There are still things physically impossible to man, and the wisest of us are those most ready to confess our ignorance. Life is as much of a mystery as ever, and death, though it has been described, analysed, accounted for, and even thwarted and held at arm’s length for a time, is still the same unconquerable foe as when it stirred to

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terror and brief misery our half-brute, half-human ancestors of primeval days. But putting aside these purely physical limitations of human life, are there not others none the less real ? All the advance which man has made in skill and knowledge has not made it one whit the easier to do the right and avoid the wrong. Circumstances have changed for the better, temptations can be guarded against more readily ; but the heart still knoweth its own bitterness, and the conscience still shrinks and trembles at wrong done. Nay, it has sadly to be confessed that modern life has increased our temptations without increasing the strength wherewith to meet them. Evil has assumed varied and insidious forms unknown to the men of a simpler and less subtle age. The very means of his advancement which man has used have, as it were, turned traitor, and opened up before him the prospect of dangers unsuspected hitherto. It is no exaggeration to say that so far from man having grown to be self-sufficient, his needs have increased step by step with his acquire-

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ments. And at his best he recognises that this is true. There is a shallow self-complacency characteristic of these days, but it is born of ignorance rather than knowledge. He who really knows and thinks is still restless, dissatisfied, conscious of his own helplessness, as men have been from the beginning of time. Larger opportunity means only, to those who can receive it aright, increased responsibility, a profound and worthier sense of their own inability to meet it. Amid all the revelations of science man discovers that the world is vaster than science dreams of. You may cram his body with food and weary it with work, but his soul refuses to rest and be thankful, and the pangs of its hunger make themselves felt in unexpected ways. You may train and develop his intellect to the utmost, but his spirit remains unsatisfied and clamorous for food. The more you teach him of the great world without and of himself, the little world within the greater, the more light will he seek on their mutual relations, and the more impossible

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does he find it to live well left to himself. The more man investigates the laws and functions of his life according to the flesh, the more does he become conscious of his moral and spiritual life, which has a sphere and requirements of its own. And just as he feels that he can only live the one life in relationship with other men about him, so he seeks to establish relationship with the world above that he may realise himself in a true spiritual life.

“’Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
More life and fuller that we want.”

This is the secret of all the dim questioning and restless inquiry of this present age. It is not that we are more than usually plagued with the gadfly of curiosity, but that men are indeed seeking the light, longing to realise themselves, asking on every side for one who shall be the shepherd and bishop of their souls.

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2. DIVINE SHEPHERDING.

And so this claim of Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd of the sheep has in it a message and an assurance which are especially fitted for us and for our time. For what in the long-run does it involve but this, that in Him we have our spiritual master and guide? He meets us in the morning of life, and through Him we are led into the wide pasture-lands of experience and service. And when the midday sun beats hard upon us, and we grow faint and weary, then He is an open door, and in Him we find the cool and shady resting-places that our souls desire. And at eventide, when the darkness deepens and the way is hard and perilous, He is a Saviour and a friend indeed.

But what does it all mean, we say? It is a beautiful imaginative picture; but what is there in reality which corresponds to it? Is there anything in this declaration of Jesus which can have practical bearing on the life, say, of a London city-man, or a

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hard-worked mother of a family? Surely there is. Man—and woman too, for the matter of that—cannot live by bread alone. And the longer they remain in this world the more true will they find that to be. As life becomes more exacting and daily duty more onerous, the need of escaping from it and rising above it becomes more imperative. Bread and meat and money and goods after all do not satisfy. And there is not one of us who does not at times, in the care and toil and worry of this life, feel like a wild bird caged, beating itself vainly against the bars. And Christ's is the hand that sets us free. It is no mere imagination or conventional belief but sober truth, that in Him we have the possibility of a larger life, a wider horizon, a freer atmosphere than any this earth can give, and an answer to our most real needs. Go back through history, and in Him will be discovered the one point where humanity sees itself to be divine, and where our life, which from certain aspects of it seems so mean and sordid, is enlarged and glorified by contact with the

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life of God. It was John himself who said in the light of his own experience : "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ?" And this confession has been endorsed in the lives of the saints from the beginning. In Christ men are not holden of these earthly bonds. Trouble and doubt and care and anguish come on the Christian as on other men, but they do not leave the same marks behind ; they have no power to spoil his prospects or to blast his career. In Christ men are able to glory in their tribulations, and that in no mere figurative sense, but because the deeper the waters and the harder the way, the closer and dearer do they find His companionship and help. But they must commit themselves to Him freely first, make Him indeed the shepherd and bishop of their souls. Low views of Christ and slight expectations from Him mean but a meagre experience of His grace. We get from Him just what we look for, and He who expects the greatest things will not be disappointed. No sheep of

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His flock has ever been left to perish in the wilderness. No man who has ever looked to Christ for shepherding and help has ever been turned empty away.

3. DYING FOR THE SHEEP.

But Jesus is not only the shepherd of His people in the sense of leading and helping them, but in the sense of saving them too. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." There seems something incongruous in the introduction of the ideas of peril and self-sacrifice amid all this lovely pastoral imagery. But it is strictly true to experience. To eastern shepherds, if not to us, sheep-stealers and wolves were very real and terrible facts. And to the earnest soul life is a serious business, sin and death grim realities. The shepherd man needs is indeed a deliverer, not a mere bland cicerone or winning example. And yet this sterner side of Christ's activity is one we easily forget or ignore. We picture Him to ourselves as a great French writer

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has done—a mild, beneficent teacher of men, of a sweet and sunny nature, speaking only palatable truths that men love to hear. And we forget that over the whole of His life there lies the shadow of the Cross, and that it was with a deep, tragic purpose that He presented Himself before men. To Him the world lay in the bondage of sin, and was not to be saved by any rose-water schemes, but by hard conflict and stern self-sacrifice. The teaching of Jesus in regard to sin is moral rather than theological, but none the less true and binding on that account. His method in dealing with it is far removed from fanaticism or extravagance, but it is trenchant and even startling. He has no theory of the origin of evil to propound, nor does He make it His business to denounce it in good set terms. But He so deals with it as to leave an ineffaceable impression of the horror of sin, of the deep and lasting ruin it works in the souls of men. As a diagnosis of the great complaint from which the whole world is suffering, the words of Jesus have

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been everywhere admitted to be exact and true. But it is one thing to acknowledge that a physician understands one's case, and quite another to submit oneself to His remedies. And it is here that many men stop short. For the remedy which Jesus offered for the sin of the world was nothing less than Himself. He does not merely show His sheep the way they must go ; He stands between them and their peril, and receives into His own flesh the wolf's sharp fangs. But men prefer to take Him on their own terms rather than on His own. They pass by His own strong revelation and condemnation of sin, the free forgiveness which He offers to all who will repent, and prefer to rest rather in the theories they have framed to explain these things to themselves. Surely it needs to be insisted on that it is Jesus Himself and not any doctrine of Jesus that saves men from their sins. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And this does not mean simply that He died in order to reveal God's perfect love to man, and so touch our hearts

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and lead us to new and holier activities. No doubt these things are among the effects of His action, but they by no means give a complete account of it. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," and by His devotion the sheep are saved and helped; and the reason for it all is not simply His desire to sacrifice Himself, but the peril in which they stand. Were there no wolves or robbers, the shepherd would not need to give his life; and had there been no sin, Christ need not have died. It is through His death that we realise the true significance of our own state. The soul's sin lies, not in any evil habit or series of wrong actions, but in itself. And the escape from sin is through the renewal of the man's inmost life. When we say that Christ died for our sins, we mean that He is suffering for the recovery of a soul, however low it may have fallen. And this is not mere theory, a statement of something that under conceivable circumstances might happen; it is a record of accomplished facts, in the light and strength of which

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men and women have lived for long years. No doubt it is not easy to give the why and wherefore of it all. But as has often been pointed out in every other department of thought, we begin with facts and hold fast to them, even though many theories are offered to explain them and none are wholly satisfactory. And here, though theories have changed complexion with the changing thought of every age, the fact remains. That Christ died for the sins of men has been the true basis of all Christian life. It has assured men of the reality of the Fatherhood of God, and given them the adoption of sons. It has been the ground of their immortal hope, and has kindled within them the fires of an undying love for Christ. It has inspired the joy and freedom of man's worship, and has brought home to him the true blessedness of communion with God. It has enlarged and intensified his faith, and even in the presence of the vast mass of human sin and misery, it has spoken peace to the soul, and has filled it with the hope

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of a love which never faileth and a mercy which endureth for ever. The weakest and most timid of all the flock have been able to live and be strong in the presence of the good shepherd who "giveth his life for the sheep."

IV

THE WAY

(John xiv. 6)

WE are all familiar with the distinction sometimes drawn between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith. There is a sense in which it is perfectly true and useful. It may easily, however, be so pressed as to become artificial, and it is well that we should be reminded that there are not two Christs but one, and that Jesus of Nazareth when He was upon earth claimed for Himself the utmost which the most ardent disciple would wish to render to Him in the way of faith and worship. In such words as these : "I am the way, the truth, and the life," the historical Jesus is set forth as being also the Christ of faith. And the magnitude of this self-

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assertion becomes the more apparent when we remember that the words were accepted and endorsed and are now handed down to us by the deliberate judgment of the writer of this Gospel. We owe at least this debt to the disciples of Jesus, that their dullness sometimes forms an admirable background to the light of His truth. Had the Master been speaking to pupils of high intelligence and quick perception, much in the discourse must necessarily have escaped us. We gain immeasurably from the fact that His treasure had to be poured into earthen vessels, that His truth had to be made clear to men of simple and untutored minds. So, many of the most divine and precious revelations of Jesus come to us in the shape of answers to honest perplexity. It is so especially in these last discourses recorded by John; and though he puts his own interpretation on the words of Jesus, that does not altogether obscure them. The situation he describes is as follows: The little company has taken its last meal in common, and in a few brief hours the separation will have

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begun. But this is better understood by the Master than by His followers. And while He is trying to lead their thoughts upward and onward to that which transcends all earthly things, and to a hope of a reunion that death itself cannot sever, they dwell miserably on the dismal thought that the Master proposes to go away, and that they cannot follow Him. This is the key to the questions at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th chapters of John. And not until Thomas with blunt simplicity openly challenges the Master's statement, and reveals that all the while they are at cross purposes, does Jesus change His tone from one of mere personal exhortation and openly state the truth in His mind. "Ye cannot follow whither I go, because I am going to prepare a place for you. I go to my Father and your Father, and no one cometh to the Father but by Me. I am Myself the way, and the truth, and the life."

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I. THE FIGURE USED.

Now in asking what it was that Jesus meant when He told His disciples that He was for them the way, it will hardly be necessary to emphasise the purely spiritual nature of the revelation. It is more manifest to us than it could have been to them. Their minds were occupied with the things of time and sense, with their forlorn prospect, with this mysterious journey which the Master was to make, with the how and when and wherefore of it all. And just as a man toiling late at night in a close, hot room may escape for a time into the open air of heaven, and looking up to the stars in immensity above him will forget his weariness and go back strengthened and refreshed—so Christ seeks to draw away these men from their dim, earthly anxieties into the clear air of spiritual truth, to give them so high a revelation of Himself and His mission as that they shall be prepared to meet bravely the disappointment and per-

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secution that are in store for them. And He knew what He was doing. Though they were speaking and thinking of the way by which *He* should go, He wished to tell them of the way by which *they* were to go, and they were not unprepared to receive His words. As devout Jews, they believed already in a way spiritual. The “way of the Lord” was a familiar phrase to them, and they too had pondered over the hard saying that “God’s ways are not man’s.” They had come to see that religion must largely consist in doing away with this contradiction and in bringing the ways of men more into conformity with those of God. And so the words, “I am the way,” would touch a responsive chord in their hearts. There can be no doubt that, put in this personal form, such teaching would in time wake them to new endeavour to make this way theirs. So much at least we may gather from the prominence of the term “the way” in early Christian writings. It signified what the Master here surely meant, that devotion to His Person was to become

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a line of action for men, a way for man to God, through this life to a higher, opened and kept open by Him, to be followed by His own. And this much at least Christ as the way must be for us. We must lay all stress on the word "is," if we would interpret the phrase aright. It is far more than that Christ shows us the way. It may be true enough that He does so, that He is for men a guide, example, teacher; but here we have something more than this, a deeper and more difficult truth, but one precious as it is deep, and life-giving as it is hard. If we fully expand the phrase, it comes just to this: that Christ is for man the way to God, to the Father. In other words, Christ does for man what he cannot do for himself—brings him to God.

But to state this is only half the battle. When we ask what do the words mean, we find that they have been interpreted in many different ways. The best of these interpretations, however, all point to the same end, are all sides of the same truth, and these alone need concern us now.

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2. A THREEFOLD APPLICATION.

And (1) it is true to say that Christ is the way to God for man, because He reveals God as God had never been revealed before. He is the way—to the Father; and these words at any rate convey one aspect of the truth as it is in Jesus. Here at least He stands in complete contrast to all previous ways, and here do we see something of the full significance of His claim to be the way rather than to reveal it. Many of those who spake to men of divine things in the old time before, might have pointed to their revelation as the way for man to God; but all that they could do was to point to it. They had a knowledge of God to impart, an authorised revelation, a sense of Him as King, Friend, even Father, which men must accept if they would have life, and which was a way wherein they might walk. But even regarding His work for a moment merely as revelation, Christ stands distinguished from these, His forerunners, and

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the distinction is best expressed by saying that He *is* the way; they only showed it. The message is one thing in the mouth of apostles and prophets, and another thing in the mouth of the Son. The Incarnation was a revelation. God was manifest, not by Christ, but in Christ. In words that were most humble while most authoritative, Jesus of Nazareth claimed to show men the Father in His own person. And to us to-day God is manifest in the flesh in Him. We must go back to the historical Jesus if we would know what is the mind of God toward us. Indeed, so deeply has Jesus impressed Himself upon human thought and life that involuntarily, and in spite of themselves, men find in Him the way to God. Take Him and His teaching out of history, and at once you lose touch with the Divine; the face of God Himself, as it were, suffers eclipse. There could be no better key to the words "I am the way" than to show how, ever since Christ appeared, men have found in Him their idea of God, and have through Him been brought face to

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face with the eternal. In doing this we might dwell at length on the character of the God Christ revealed as constituting the main burden of His revelation. But it will be more to the purpose to spend time in noting its effect upon man. It is a truism to say that all new knowledge of God implies a corresponding change in man, registers itself in this way upon the mind, the spirit that knows. The more a man knows of God, the greater becomes his obligation to God. Thus if God is known only as a sovereign, man's duty to him can never be other than that of a subject. But if God is known as a father, man's duty to Him can never be less than that of a son. And so the revelation of God in Christ is far-reaching in its effect upon men. Indeed, its result is such that the need at once arises that it should be supplemented by something more. If God is to me all that Christ declares, then how am I to do my duty to Him? If all that He does is to reveal to me a Father in God, then I know myself only as a rebellious child, one who has for-

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feited all right to a place in the Father's house, and for whom, therefore, this way to God which Christ is said to be is rather a way from Him. In other words, the new knowledge of God which Christ imparts to man implies for man a new consciousness of sin. In revealing the love of God, Christ revealed also the sin of man, and in revealing it condemned it as it had never been condemned before. And the result of His revelation by itself is to raise in the human heart an exceeding bitter cry : "How shall we escape so great condemnation ? "

Thus (2) if we would discover how Christ is for man the way to God, we must come to see how He not only reveals God to man, but brings the two together. In other words, His revelation demands, implies a reconciliation. And here without doubt is the root of the matter : Christ is the way because through Him men come to God. Not simply to the knowledge of Him, but to live in His presence and by His power. He is the way *to* God, and the way *of* God for

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all men. And herein He answers one of the deepest needs of the human heart. Whether there be a way for him, any definite purpose in life, any coherent plan to follow, is something that man by the very nature of him wants to know. And to this want Christ gives a most deep and satisfying answer when He says, "I am the way." That is, for one thing, in and through Christ men are reconciled to God. That, apart from Him, their estrangement from God is real, they know only too well. Sin is a barrier between God and man, which all the ingenuity in the world will not suffice to pierce. And the difference between Christianity and all other religious systems may be put in words thus: that all these systems have tried to break down the barrier from the side of man and have failed; but Christ has shown that it can only be broken down on the side of God. By His revelation of the Divine nature He once and for all condemned sin, which is always in its essence distrust of God; and by sharing our nature and entering on a ministry of

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suffering on our behalf, He showed God coming into one life in order that He might come into all lives. He became, as has been said, "the door through which and by which man enters into God, and God enters into man." And the result of His life and work was not that He was sacrificed in order to appease God, but rather that in Him God made sacrifice of Himself that He might redeem man. Revealing, as He did, the love of God for man, it must needs be that He should suffer, for love always suffers so long as the loved one sins. And by His suffering He made it clear that God is with us, on our side, working ever to will and to do of His good pleasure. And so He becomes in a very real sense the way for man to God. That man may have in the presence of the Divine the peace which passeth all understanding, it is not enough for him simply to know that his transgression is covered and his sin forgiven. He needs to be redeemed from the sin, to have its power over him removed and broken, that he may stand up a free man in the

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presence of his Maker. And this conquest over sin he cannot win for himself. Here Christ is his helper, because in the sacrifice of the Son of Man there is embodied a new conception of God and of His relation to man's sin. Hereby Christ opens for man the door to an eternal life, and is for man the means by which he may attain it. As has been well said : "He makes the salvation of no man actual, but of all men possible, dependent on conditions that men must fulfil. The righteousness which is without works is not without faith, and so the possible salvation is realised by Him who believeth. Hence even under it, man remains free, responsible, saved by grace, but through faith."

And (3) this brings us to a further sense in which Christ is a way for men, a way *of* God as well as a way *to* God. Whom He saves He sanctifies. The work of reconciliation is also a work of redemption, because it not only leads to a new attitude towards God, but to a new life in God. There can be little doubt that it was in

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this sense mainly that the disciples would first understand their Master's words. Whilst He walked with them in this world, He supplied the plan according to which they were to frame all their actions. And in departing from them, He left this plan behind. True, He sent to them also the Spirit to be their guide, but this was not to supersede His own work. As has been said : " Utter obedience to the Father's will, utter love of the brethren, and the utter sacrifice of self which is the constant inward condition of both, remained to all eternity the substance of every human greatness, as they had been shown to be the powers by which the Son of God fulfilled the work committed to Him alone, while the wisdom of the Spirit's teaching cast them again and again in ever-new moulds." And in the same manner Christ is the way for His people still. In and through Him they live the life of God in this world. The whole history of Christendom on its highest side has been one long illustration of this—has shown how in Christ

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men live and move and have their being, and attain to the highest life possible. There is nothing here arbitrary or unnatural. When Christ proclaims Himself as the way, and urges us to walk therein, He is not offering us the choice between following the strait and narrow path on the one hand, and on the other freedom to wander at one's own sweet will. In any case, it is only a question between different ways. A man begins life fancying himself at liberty to walk as he will; but experience is only another name for the discovery that he is being led in one way or another whether he will or no. The various ways of this world become in time more and more distinct, and everyone is impelled by growing habit to follow this one or that. And we know only too well that of these various ways some are better than others, some leading upward, others always down. And the sole claim that Christ makes is that His way is the best of them all; that in it a man is best able to develop his nature upon every side and to attain most of God. To

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follow Him is not, as is so often represented, to stunt and shackle our powers, and to shut ourselves off from life in its broader and higher aspects. It is rather to set our feet in a large room, and enter upon a service which is perfect freedom. In discipleship to Jesus Christ the moral nature of man receives its crown and perfection. Love is the fulfilling of His law, and the love He engenders in the heart purifies the nature like a refiner's fire. But the life that is in Him is not only moral but spiritual. In Christ man enters into his proper inheritance as the son of God, and so starts on a way which leads him from the temporal to the eternal, from earth to heaven. The glory of this religion of ours is not simply that it leads to a life beautiful and good according to the standards of this world, but that it transforms this life into the image of a higher, and sets before man as the end of his journeying an eternal habitation. All this is comprehended in the assurance that Christ is the Way.

V

THE TRUTH

(John xiv. 6)

IT has been said that “smooth ways of thought are like smooth ways of action. Truth is never grasped and held fast without friction and grappling.” This is probably the reason why men willingly evade the quest of truth if they can. Christian people especially are tempted in this direction, and some even to deny that their religion has an intellectual side at all. They doubt whether reason can claim any jurisdiction in the regions of faith, and they imagine that the only possible use of knowledge is unduly to puff up those who possess it. And so it is quite as well that we should sometimes face the whole question here involved; that we should take up the

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challenge which the Master Himself seems to throw down in these very difficult and most striking words, "I am the truth." In so saying He seems to give an answer to the question which had perplexed the ages before Him, and which is not done with yet. The question was summed up by Pilate in the puzzled and half-mocking inquiry, "What is truth?" He was annoyed at the presumption of this Galilean teacher in speaking so glibly and with such assurance of that which the wisest men in the world would only mention with bated breath, and the pursuit of which they followed almost as a forlorn hope. And Pilate has had many since his day to share his scepticism. Even those who would willingly concede the claim of Christ to be the way and the life will stumble at the bold assurance that He is the truth.

Now, before we can arrive even at a dim understanding of these words, we must realise their close connection with the context, and we must look at them in the light of other and similar utterances on the

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part of the Master. It was not for nothing that He here connected in a single sentence the three terms—"the way," "the truth," and "the life"—as predicates of Himself. There is a sense in which He is the way for men, because He is the truth and the life. There is also a sense in which He is the truth and the life, because He is the way. And when we say "He is the truth," we mean that in and through Him men arrive at the truth, just as when we say "He is the way" we mean that in and through Him men arrive at God. No doubt, however, such a statement requires a good deal of further elucidation, and we need not go far to find other scriptures which throw light upon it. For example, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice." And again, "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "The

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Law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "He that sent Me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." From such passages as these we may gather that Christ was a teacher of truth, and that the truth was to be found in His word. To this must be added the further and more important statement of the text that He not only teaches and imparts, but *is* the truth—a statement which includes and transcends all others of a similar kind. And yet even this does not exhaust His treatment of the subject. In speaking to the disciples of the Comforter who is to come and take the place vacated by Himself at His death, Christ gives to this Comforter the name of the Spirit of truth, and declares that His office will be to lead the disciples into all the truth. He will put them in mind of all that Christ has said unto them, and make clear to their understanding things which during the Master's

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lifetime they were not able to bear. Christ as the truth is the object of all their knowledge ; and the work of the Spirit as witness to the truth will not be to supersede or dispense with the Master, but rather to lead His followers to a closer apprehension of the truth and to a wider application of it to life. And this is a process that will know no end till time itself shall cease. The last thing that Christ meant in declaring Himself to be the truth was that He would thereby shut the door on all further knowledge and inquiry. Rather did He manifestly imply that the truth given in and through Him would by the Spirit be freshly expounded in every age, and that no new light which should thus be given by the Spirit would be able to draw men away from Him who is eternally the Truth.

This is a word which has far-reaching applications. It implies that we are not shut up to any doctrine or body of doctrines as alone containing the truth, nor are we to regard the spoken words of Jesus as being

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the only intellectual guide for man. In so saying the evangelist is not committing us to any theories of inspiration, nor is he confining himself to truth, theological and religious. The range of the truth of which he speaks is almost unlimited; it is at least as wide as the heart of God and the interest of man. He claims that the truth which Christ is sets men free, leaves their intellect untrammelled. Wherever men need to inquire, and to know in order to become better and more perfect men, there He leads them. And, therefore, the truth which He is is more than a set of propositions; it is an outlook upon life, a theory of the universe, an indwelling of God. It has to do with both subjective knowledge and objective knowledge. Christ as truth does not merely give a correct presentation of God and the universe to man, but He makes man such as that he shall be able to *receive* such a presentation when it is given.

But in order more fully to grasp the meaning of this revelation of Christ, we

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shall need to look at some of its aspects more in detail.

I. THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD.

In this we have the more theological side of the subject. Jesus Christ is for men the truth about God. Through Him we arrive at a true conception of the Divine. As He said: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." By Christians, at any rate, this aspect of the matter will be readily granted, though even by them it is not so frequently acted upon as it might be. It should be recognised by us that in and through Jesus Christ alone we can know God. No doubt knowledge of Him may come from other sources—from Old Testament revelation, from natural religion, from the study of the religions of the world; but all such knowledge is useless for moral and spiritual ends save as it is brought in review, corrected, and confirmed by Jesus Christ. In His life and speech, and most of all in His death, we have God revealed. And He

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becomes, therefore, the standard by which all other impressions and indications of the Divine may be and should be judged. The more we understand Him—and we are very far from understanding Him yet—the more do we know of God ; we have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That is, in Christ we have the knowledge of God expressed in terms of humanity. He is the highest truth about the Divine, not only in its abstract sense, but the highest for us, because it is that which we can best perceive. From the beginning God's revelation had been leading up to this clear light, and since the light shone the Spirit of God has been helping men more and more fully to enter into it, leading them on from glory to glory, until they shall be changed into the image of the Son of Man. And do not let us cast any reflection upon the truth as it is in Jesus from our own incapacity to grasp it. Do not let us say that He cannot be the truth as regards God, because there has existed in His name and through His

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Church so much falsehood and evil. We must remember that the work of the Spirit is not yet completed ; that our minds are as yet very dimly illumined by the true light ; that the Master still reminds us, “ I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.” When Christ is known and served as He may be and ought to be, then and not till then will the truth of God be in the mind of man. And until that time comes we must be content to see through a glass darkly. We may be thankful that we live in an age which has a larger opportunity of arriving at the truth than any before it. As Dr. Fairbairn says : “ It is certainly not too much to say that Christ is to-day more studied and better known as He was and as He lived than at any period between now and the first age of the Church.” If this be so, then let us see to it that we follow the lead of the Spirit of truth. Let us use the new and better knowledge of the Christ as a spring of new devotion and of a purer life in His service. Let us see to it that we do not

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blind our eyes, and say that all truth dwells with us, which is only to say that we have most successfully quenched the Spirit. Let us keep an open mind in order that by every possible avenue new light may stream into us. For us to know God is life eternal. The quest of divine truth is the very necessity of our spiritual being, and our one object and aim should be ever to press nearer to the Christ who is the truth, and whose truth can alone make us free.

2. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE UNIVERSE.

Christ is for man not only the truth about God, but the truth about the universe. Only in and through Him can men attain to truth about the life and the world around them. Perhaps we can best approach this from the point of view of the common statement that the attainment of truth depends at least as much upon the condition of mind of the man that seeks it as upon the objects presented to him. The reason why truth is one thing to one man

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and another to another, is that the men are different. And in saying that Christ is the truth we mean for one thing at least that He is able to remove such differences, and to help men to look out upon the world in such a way, as that they shall best be able to apprehend it aright. It is not for nothing that He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Truth is not grasped by a single faculty, but by a combination of all the faculties of the whole man, and whatever tends to spoil, degrade, and warp the nature of the man tends also to loosen his hold upon truth. Evil passions and immoral actions cause men to look out upon the world as those who are colour-blind ; they can see only what they have prepared themselves to see, and the truth is not in them. Now the work of Jesus Christ is to order and arrange the spirit of man into a perfect harmony. In and through Him our human nature appears at its best, and therefore through Him can we best arrive at a right outlook upon the world around us. He is to us the truth, because He can

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put things right on our side, and at least enable us to see true. But there are yet other ways in which we may arrive at this same conclusion. Philosophy can show us how it is necessary for the mind as mind to relate itself to God. That is, the more we know of God the better use can we make of our whole mental equipment. So to be without knowledge of Him, to shut Him off from us, and to draw a veil between His intelligence and ours, is to lessen our intellectual power, and to mar the impression which His universe makes upon us. This may seem a bold thing to say, but let us try and explain what it means. We do not need to remind ourselves that in these days the terms "knowledge" and "truth" are by many people confined to this lower world of ours. The sum total of the physical sciences seems to many to contain all the truth; everything outside of them is to be relegated to the region of speculation, if not of positive error. Now consider for a moment the position of a man who would

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confine his knowledge to this lower world. He is faced continually by phenomena for which in this world he can find no explanation, and he has to be contented with assuming towards them an attitude of pure ignorance or, as he calls it, of agnosticism. But does not this really mean that he looks out upon the world and life with a mental bias or prejudice which is sure to affect his apprehension of what he calls the truth. And are we not at least fair in saying that he who is in pursuit of truth must follow wherever it leads ? We have got now beyond the stage of a flat denial of God ; and admitting that there is a God above as well as an earth beneath us, can we for a moment suppose that to confine our attention only to the earth is the surest way to arrive at supreme truth ? Is not the very contrary the case, that men cannot even know this earth well until they learn to see it in the light of God ? And is not Christ for us pre-eminently the truth, because in and through Him we learn to look out upon this created scene as reflecting the

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God by whose love, power, and wisdom it came to be ?

3. THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN.

If this be true of nature, how much more is it true of man ? To seek knowledge of ourselves apart from God is indeed a vain quest. Nothing has so developed and exalted our view of humanity as the revelation of the Son of Man. The scalpel and the microscope can tell a wonderful story of these bodies of ours ; history is one long explanation of the ways and nature of man ; geology and palæontology can go beyond history and speak to us of the dim, uncertain beginnings of race ; but in all this teaching, have we in any sense the truth about man ? Most of us will confess readily that we need something more, and that our knowledge of ourselves is incomplete until the top-stone has been set upon the building by the spiritual revelation of Jesus Christ, by teaching that man was made in God's image, and lives for and unto Him.

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“As a blow of the sculptor’s mallet struck
Upon the marble’s face,
Such are God’s yea and nay upon
The spirit’s growing grace :
So work His making hands with what
Does and does not take place.”

This means that the life that we live is only worth living as God has His place in it ; and it is because Christ shows how He enters into and fills our little lives, that He is in this sense for us the Truth.

But, further, we must not let this aspect of the matter blind our eyes to the fact that for us as Christians all truth is in Christ. There is here no distinction between sacred and secular, scientific and spiritual. If we may believe in the operation and guidance of the Spirit of Truth, we shall know that every new department of knowledge that has opened for the mind of man since the days of Christ has only been another step towards a more perfect understanding of Him who is the truth. It was a bad day for religion when it came to look upon science as in any way its enemy. And the

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half-atheistic theory of the universe to which this leads is but a poor expression of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The truth of discovery, of which this generation has seen so much, is indeed a revelation from God, and rightly used will bring us nearer to the Christ. There is a truth of physical science, of history and historical criticism, which is all necessary to a proper understanding of the gospel of the Son of Man. It is possible no doubt to state this gospel in the simplest terms so that it can be grasped by the most elementary minds, but the more we know of nature and man the grander will it appear, the more superior to the one and the more suited to the other. If we believe that Christ is the truth, then shall we welcome all truth for His sake, and we shall know that our duty in regard to it is not to resist, but to illumine it with the light in which we stand, and which we have received from Him. We may well be ashamed of the panic-stricken attitude of many Christians to the new light which God is pouring in upon this age. It may

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seem different from the old, and it may cause us much painful readjustment of intellectual states, stiff with long-standing. But we are still in God's hands, His spirit is active still. All this that has come upon us—scientific discoveries, biological theories, Biblical criticism—was all foreshadowed by the Master and is all the result of the working of the Spirit of truth in order to reveal Him more fully. And our attitude to it should be one of silent, grateful faith. Silent, because there is yet more light to come; grateful, because the opportunity for faith is so much larger. There is danger in nothing save in ignorance and darkness. Let us keep our faces turned ever to the light of God, sure that He is wiser than we are, and that all truth can only bring us nearer to Him.

“God is not dumb that He should speak no more;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And find’st not Sinai, ’tis thy soul is poor:
There towers the Mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, nor hears its thundered lore.”

VI

THE LIFE

(John xiv. 6)

THESE words form the climax of the story of our Lord's self-revelation to Thomas. Of the three steps or stages here given the last is the highest. It may be true that we cannot understand how Christ is "the life" without in some measure at least knowing Him as "the truth" and "the way"; but certain it is that He only becomes to us the way and the truth as we grow to find in Him our life. As a rough expression of the distinction here involved, we may say that the relation between Christ and His disciples is not only moral as when spoken of in "the way," or intellectual as in "the truth," but must also be spiritual as indicated by the term "life." And in

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the life which Christ is for men, and where-with He inspires all His followers, we have the end which is aimed at in every other function and character which He assumes. A careful study of the remainder of the discourse in which these words occur will support this conclusion. Though the term "life" seems almost to disappear and to give place to that of "love," the whole tenor of the argument points in the direction of a living union between Himself and His own, the attainment of which is the supreme end of their being and of His; for He came into the world that men might have life and have it more abundantly. And here we have an ample and sufficient definition, not only of Christianity, but of revelation itself. And in looking to Christ, and celebrating His coming into the world, we are moved, so far as we are consciously moved at all, by the grateful sense that in Him is life—a new, more potent, more engrossing life for men. Here too is the end and aim of all Christian activities the

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world over. We preach not to make proselytes, but to produce life.

I. THE SUPREME TEST OF RELIGION.

The difference between a man who has religion and one who has not cannot be better expressed than in this way—that one is alive, the other dead. Probably to many this is rather a hackneyed and unmeaning phrase, but when we come to look at it, there is a great gulf fixed between one whose spirit has been once kindled by contact with the Divine Spirit, and one who lives without God in the world. It is not implied for a single moment that all so-called religious people have this kindling of spiritual life in themselves, or that all those who are outside ordinary religious circles are without it. It is certain, however, that this is the test we ought to apply in gauging the religion of men. The mischief is that, with the tests commonly in vogue, it is quite possible for men to have the name of Christian when their religion is not a life but only ■

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death cunningly concealed. And not until we come to the conclusion that the outward observance and expression of the religion are nothing, but the inward spirit everything, shall we be able really to separate the chaff from the wheat. Our ordinary distinctions between religious people, differences of church name and organisation, differences of religious belief and doctrinal expression, are utterly meaningless beside the broad line which marks off the spiritual from the unspiritual, the quick from the dead. If a man is spiritually alive, we need not care very much in what forms his life finds for itself expression. These things are at best secondary; the great thing is that he be alive unto God. And so the great object of all our church teaching and church activity is not to make men good churchmen or good dissenters, but to wake them up to the sense of the reality of spiritual things; to work on them that miracle of which the prophet Ezekiel tells, and clothe their dry bones with living flesh. No doubt it is a respectable triumph

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to have compassed heaven and earth in the making of a proselyte; but what is that after all to the joy of having been instrumental in the birth of a soul, of having roused in one human heart the passion for the Divine, that upward looking and forward longing that will speed it to its true goal in God. And it is because we so often lose the latter and higher of these objects in the former and lower, because we forget the inner spirit in preparing the outward show, that our religion is after all so poor a business, a mere stage-play, a hypocrisy, a thing of masks and mummery, rather than a full, potent, and active life. And do not let us think that we are here raising what is, after all, a mere metaphor to the dignity of irrefragable truth. When Christ said, "I am the life," He was using language of sober fact, and was preparing the way for a St. Paul, who should be able to say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." And the experience is not confined to St. Paul. Many a Christian now knows himself to be alive in a sense he was not

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once, because he is open to the influence of the facts and relationships of a far grander and higher order of things than this material world. There is nothing mean or paltry about the religion of Jesus Christ, though there may be in our expression of it. Give it scope, however, and it opens the heart of man to all noble and uplifting influences, and "brings the soul within the sight and sweep of a whole world of facts, which transcend this world as heaven excels the earth, and which have power to stir more absorbing desires, more overwhelming sorrows, and more rapturous joys than any that are born of time and sense." Compared with the life lived in these high regions and in this clear air, the life lived in the flesh and the world alone is but a death in life. There is no more comparison between the two than there is between the life which a man lives in the centre of modern civilisation with a refined and complex environment, and the existence of a dull savage in the primeval forests of Central Africa. Face to face with God, men live as

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they cannot live by any other means. They may be low in station and poor in dress, their natures may be commonplace and even vulgar; but if we look below the surface we shall find that they have an inner life, which they keep for other eyes than ours, and which is rich in experience, lofty in enthusiasm, large in hope. And these men, we say, live indeed, because they have a life which is independent of all outward circumstances and surroundings, which ill-fortune cannot mar, and death itself cannot kill.

And Christ is for man this life. That is to say, in and through Christ we may obtain this life, and by Him it is sustained. He is at once its source and its goal. As to the process by which Christ becomes the life of men, we can say very little. We do not know, for example, how seed germinates, and brings forth first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. It is with results rather than with processes we have to deal. We must be cautious, too, how we here press the metaphor of the

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new birth, and beware of turning analogies into laws. The life which Christ gives is sometimes spoken of as a life which has been once lost, and therefore not newly given. It is regarded as the healing of the sick and the raising from the dead. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." "You did He quicken who were dead in trespasses and sins." It is, therefore, a life not utterly abnormal or even supernatural. Man is a spiritual being, and contact with Christ kindles the latent spirit of God within him. Man was made in God's image, and Christ is his life, because He has proved His power to bring out this image, and make all its grandest features clear.

2. THE LAWS BY WHICH IT ■ GOVERNED.

Having said so much, we may go on to show how the life Christ is comes under some of those laws which govern all life as we know it. For instance, we say that all life is derived and resembles that from which

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it is derived. Or, in other words, life is passed on from one organism to another, and always after its own kind. And so may we not only say that it is through Christ that Christians live, but that it is His life which is reproduced in them. And this brings us at least a step nearer the heart of the matter. When He said, "I am the life," He meant to do more than remind us that we possess a life resembling the life that is in Him. The parable of the Vine and the Branches teaches clearly enough that the same life animates both, and the whole of New Testament teaching regarding the mystery of communion between Christians and their Lord goes to show that they become partakers of the life that was in Him. The best illustration of this that we can find is that derived from our experience of contact between human personalities. We all know how contact with a greater and stronger personality produces effects in us that may reasonably be compared to the importation of new life. So contact with Jesus Christ, through

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the doing of His will and the thinking of His thoughts, means that virtue goes out from Him and enters into His followers. The result is not only that we come to share His standpoint and to see things with His eyes, but that a new vital force enters into us. We receive power from on high, and become capable of efforts which would be impossible to our unaided strength. In the first enthusiasm of the Christian propaganda the gospel was quite commonly represented in terms of force. "It was the power of God unto salvation," and it was so because it brought men and women within range of a spiritual renewal which meant to them "the power of an endless life." The means by which this was accomplished was the dominating personality of Jesus Christ, who became to men the source of a new life and hope. As devotion to Him absorbed their energies, and the life that they lived in the flesh took a new and higher direction, they were freed from its temporary distractions and were able to concentrate themselves on the eternal goal.

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So doing, they learned for themselves the secret of the words : "The choice of ways is arbitrary, the problem of truth is insoluble until council has been held in the inner shrine of life."

But, further, the life thus given must be sustained and must grow. So salvation in Christ has its perfect work, because He is not merely the giver but the nourisher of divine life in man. God hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, and so hath called us into fellowship with Himself. As Dr. Dale says : "The life of faith in the Son of God is the ideal life for man. When God calls us into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, He calls us back to those divine heights which are native to us, to our original place in the Divine household." And may we not say, we keep the place thus given, and climb ever higher those hills of God, by the grace which this same Christ supplies ? Life must be constantly nourished if it is to win in the fight with the forces of decay and death, and we must eat of the bread and

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drink of the water of life if we would live and not die. Or, to render this into plain prose, we must cultivate the spiritual habit, and in the things of God deal with ourselves in as orderly and rigorous a fashion as in the things of daily life. The fact that the life is given to us in Christ does not absolve us from all responsibility. It is a free ethical and spiritual life which is given, and it rests with us to make it what it may become. He works in us through certain appointed and, we may say, natural channels, and we have to make room for His operation. It is given to us to quench as well as to cherish the life He supplies. And when we say He sustains as well as gives it, it must always be with the reservation, if we will. While on His side are springs of living water, clouds big with fatness, on ours must be the thirsty land that waits for the early and latter rain. "I am the vine," He says, "ye are the branches"; "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." And in this fresh image we can see how our life not only is drawn from

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His, but depends upon a constant and intimate communion with Him. In the spiritual as in the natural world it is true that communion is the law of all life. Independent life tends to degenerate into its lower and primitive elements. And to a true communion there are at least two parties. Christ has done His share of the work and does it, and it remains for us to do ours. Hence the imperative need for our cultivation of the spiritual habit of prayer, for example, which is the drawing in of Divine life from the spring, of spiritual exercises which are the gymnastics of the soul and train us for climbing on the mountains of God, of faith which reveals to us that God's stores are inexhaustible, and so makes the Christ-life in us, as has been said, "not a luxury, but an energy."

And, once more, the life thus originated and sustained reproduces itself. If it is to live, it must increase and propagate its kind. If we are in Christ, then we shall manifest or advertise Christ. We shall show that His word is to us not a mere formal state-

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ment of truth, but spirit and life. Apart from Him, we can indeed do nothing ; but the question is whether we do all that we might do, having Him and with His life in us. Does the fruit we bear show that we are of a surety branches of the true vine ? We need to act more resolutely up to the often-expressed conviction that life in Christ is not mere sentiment, but an energy of the soul. He must work through us as well as in us. And the value of the work thus done is the exact measure of the depth and reality of the spiritual life we live in Him. Of all this the disciples give us the best, if the most elementary, examples. With the departure of Jesus from the earth they entered upon a new stage in their devotion to Him. And it is significant that they then learned to look to Him not simply as a blessed memory, but as a practical inspiration. The power of that Spirit which He gave they realised in the promise, " Lo, I am with you alway " ; and they went about doing not their own work, but the work of Him who had chosen and sent them forth.

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And therein is our discipleship to-day—in doing the works of the Master in His stead, and not in vapid worship or empty profession of His name. To succour the poor and needy, to preach the gospel to the outcast, to teach the ignorant, to nurse the sick, to live in peace and charity with all—these things, and not any systems of doctrine, however well ordered, are the legitimate and natural result of the Christian life in man.

And so, finally, this life which Christ is, like His truth, is very broad. Its glory is that it includes every other kind of life. They who live through Him and in whom He is, can never confine their interests and activities to some small section of existence which they call religious, and shut themselves off from all other life because they label it as secular. There is a lower and a higher in all life, undoubtedly, but the province of the higher is to absorb that which is lower. The life of Christ is given to men that they may spread it, and so by it spiritualise the universe. It would be a

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fine thing if Christians would live as though they believed in their Christianity, in its spreading, reproductive power. They could offer then a bolder front to evil, and give much-needed confirmation to their own faith. It is sheer faint-heartedness and arrant lack of faith to deal with the Christian life as though it were some delicate exotic, to be shielded from every breath of air and kept in a glass house, a prisoner for ever. This life is indeed spiritual, but it was given that it might permeate all life. It must be suffered freely to mix with lower life, and not be pent up in a prison-house of strained emotions. The Christianity that puts a mask on a man, makes his movements awkward, and fetters his freedom, is as false as it is unnatural. This life of our Lord is not as one life among many ; it is the supreme life, destined to prevail over all others, to absorb everything that is best in humanity. And so, if we live in Him indeed, we live most intensely. The life of the spirit leads to more active and nobler life in the body. Our stake in life is doubled,

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our interest in men and the affairs of men vastly increased. The Christian lives as no other man can live, because his life is the most fruitful in results, the most broad in outlook, and the most full of joy.

Now let us go back to the point raised at the beginning. This aspect of the Christian religion as a life which is in Christ and which Christ is, is as old as Christianity itself, but, as far as Christians are concerned, it is comparatively new. In the *Life of Dean Stanley* it is stated that he was one of the first to reach and maintain the point that religion was life rather than creed. This has become now quite a pulpit commonplace, but there is still need for it to be transferred from the pulpit to the pew. The root of the whole matter is in the fact that the difference between the spiritual and the unspiritual is absolute. The end of all religious teaching is to open men's eyes, to transfer them to a finer atmosphere, make them live again. Christ is to us nothing until we have ceased merely to speculate about Him, and come to share

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His life. In the famous words of Melancthon: "To know Christ is to know the benefits He confers, not merely to be acquainted with His natures and the modes of His Incarnation."

VII

DYING TO LIVE

(John xii. 20-26)

THESE words, contained in John xii. 20-26, form the last and most important link in a considerable chain of events. The Evangelist has reached the supreme point of his story, and he arranges his material with dramatic power so as to bring out his meaning in the most forcible way. We have seen how his historical method leads him to exhibit Jesus as a witness to Himself. He is made to stand out before the reader's mind as the one clear figure against a very varied background. Now He is revealing Himself to hostile and suspicious Jews, now to some poor suppliant for His favours, now to His disciples, and now to a circle of intimate friends at Bethany. And in every

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case He strikes out from contact with others some fresh spark of light, and fills up the sum of His revelation. The story of this Gospel reaches a culminating point in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. So signal an act of power could not pass unheeded, and the Evangelist shows how it was of great weight and moment in determining the future action of Jesus and the attitude of others towards Him. From this time it was clear—to use the language of another Evangelist—that “He could not be hid.” The fame of His action had gone abroad, and for the moment He had become notorious. It must surely have been the sense of this, the feeling that the old, quiet, unobtrusive method was no longer possible, that led Jesus to resolve on a formal public entry into Jerusalem. He seems to be considering that the end is now near, and that for a little while it behoves Him to step out into the open that He may do His work aright. The city was crammed with visitors for the great feast. The people are all on holiday, and

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ready for any excitement or novelty. The roads leading to the city are thronged with processions of pilgrims all bent on the same end. And Jesus with His little company simply makes one more amongst these. He does so with deliberate intention, and the people take Him at His word. The fame of Him has gone abroad, and His coming is eagerly expected. And when they see Him and the guise in which He comes, mounted "upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," all their surmises and half-formed hopes concerning Him are crystallised in a moment. They recall the old prophecy: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass"; and they break into the welcoming cry: "Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." This means that they recognised then, as Jesus most probably intended that they

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should, that He claimed to be the Messiah who was to come, the Son of God and the Saviour of His people. And we soon learn how great was the excitement which this occasioned. The whole world seemed to go after Him, and for the moment His enemies despaired. The foreigners who had come up to the feast, as well as the home-born Jews, were deeply moved. Certain Greek-speaking proselytes came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida, and therefore probably familiar with their language, and asked him : “Sir, we would see Jesus.” They came in no mere spirit of curiosity, but to discover for themselves whether there was to be found in this stranger from Nazareth the answer to their lifelong desire. Philip, remembering how the Twelve had been forbidden to enter into the cities of the Gentiles, consults Andrew first, and then with Andrew tells Jesus of the strangers’ request. The answer of Jesus is wonderful —one of those strange, baffling words which show us the deep undercurrents of His mind, and help us to see all the events of

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His life in a new and more solemn light. The first thought is one of gladness, even exultation. To Jesus the visit of these Greeks is a prophecy of yet greater things. One begins to see almost the travail of His soul. The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. But swift on this follows the shadow of the Cross. The sense of the way by which He is to walk, of the means by which He is to attain His end, seem never absent from the consciousness of Jesus. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

I. THE PARABLE AS APPLIED TO JESUS.

It is a parable in a single sentence, and yet its meaning is perfectly clear. As Professor Rendel Harris says: “Some of the most solemn teaching of Jesus Christ rests on elementary facts and processes of Nature, and is all the more universal and comprehensible for so doing.” The lesson

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of “the corn of wheat” appeals to us to-day, and to men of every time, as it did to the hearers of Jesus. There are in the last analysis only two possible ways in which wheat grains may be used by men. They may either be consumed at once for food, or may be buried in the earth, there to rot until out of their death springs a new, manifold, and more beautiful life. And here is the teaching of this story as to Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah, acknowledged as such by the people. He is perfectly willing to let the fact be known, only He must be allowed to put His own interpretation upon it. The hosannas of the crowd, the eager inquiry of these Greek strangers, and the growing excitement of His own followers—these things all show how easy it would be to make mistakes at the initial point, and how necessary it was for Him to anticipate them. And it is this that gives rise to the words before us. To accept the rôle of the Messiah in the form in which it presented itself to the popular imagination, would have been to Jesus to waste His life, to use it

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for His own profit and pleasure rather than for the high ends of God ; or, to return to the language of His parable, to consume His corn at once instead of sowing it in the hope of a fat harvest. In the mind of Jesus the Messianic office is never separated from the sacrifice of the Cross, and, as His earthly life advanced, the link between the two grew ever closer. It may fairly be said that His own idea of His work was so exalted that even to Him no price could be too great to pay for its safe accomplishment. We have to try to realise that He looked at things under the form of eternity, and that what seems to us sometimes revolting and unnecessary in His sacrifice, could have had no such meaning for Him. That a grain of wheat should die that it might bear fruit was in the natural order of things. And we may as well confess at once that, in the past, theology has often led men astray by representing the sacrifice of Jesus as though it were something artificial and of the nature of a set scheme. There is no doubt a reason and a meaning for such terms

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as "plan of salvation," "scheme of redemption," and the like; but they are false and misleading if they picture to us the sacrifice of Jesus as a clever contrivance on the part of Deity, instead of as the spontaneous and inevitable result of Divine love in a world of sinners. It must needs be that Christ should suffer, and the necessity lay not in the miserable condition into which the world had fallen through sin, but in the nature of God Himself, which made it a work of pure grace. And this is the reason why to separate this mystery of sacrifice from the life of Jesus Christ would be like tearing the heart out of a living human body. He lived in order that He might die. To strip His death of all special and peculiar significance is to stultify His whole life and appearance among men. Nor is all this a mere after-thought suggested by the story of Calvary. Again and again in the life and teaching of Jesus we meet with passages and incidents which are quite inexplicable save in view of His Cross. The very men who heard

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and witnessed them were by their own confession baffled and misled by them. To them Christ was still behind the veil. The mystery was only clear to the conscience of Jesus Himself ; and it indicates how large a place it held in His mind and heart that He should have returned to it repeatedly in spite of the confusion and misunderstanding which He knew it must inevitably cause. He could not conceal from Himself or from those about Him that He had come into the world to lay down His life. And when we remember how the Apostle Paul set the sacrifice of Christ in the very forefront of his teaching, it should convince us that he had in him more of the mind of the Master than men sometimes have been willing to admit. If Jesus before the event looked to His death as the great purpose of His life, we need not wonder that His followers afterwards looked back to it with most passionate devotion and love. It was the crown and fulfilment of His whole being, the final achievement of the grand purpose of His life. “Verily, verily, I say

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unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

2. THE PARABLE AS APPLIED TO US.

In these words Jesus was not merely enunciating a law of His own life; He was giving utterance to a principle which governs, or ought to govern, the life of man throughout the world. He had a definite purpose in the use of an analogy from the natural world of seed corn and harvest, and He showed that He was laying down a universal rule in the words which follow: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." It is with the life of a man as with a grain of wheat. A man may keep his life for himself, spend it on the passing hour, and so in a sense have done with it; or he may keep it not for himself but for others, live for the future and the things which are above rather than for the present which is around him. Let

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him lose his life then, and so set in motion fruitful and mighty forces, as from a seed sown in the earth. This was the great law of human life, which Jesus made known. In Himself He exemplified it to the highest degree possible. And we cannot find a better means of interpreting His sacrifice than by watching the normal operation of the law of sacrifice in ourselves. Here our appeal is in the first instance simply to common sense and the more enlightened feelings of humanity. It needs no extraordinary depth of religion to condemn selfishness. That the selfish life is but a death in life even men of the world will sometimes admit. To be selfish is to be anti-social, a drag on the wheels of the chariot of progress. It hinders the comfort and advancement of all around, and therefore our very instincts condemn it. And the mere moralist speaks in the same strain. To be selfish has a hardening and deadening effect on human nature, drags a man down to the lowest possible depths, reveals him at his very worst. The life

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and teaching of Jesus Christ only carried to its logical conclusion this universal human sentiment. He showed that something more than mere unselfishness was needed if we would live well. He showed man that his life was as a seed which must be cast away into "the soil of other men's needs" before it can attain its natural development and fulfil its true purpose in the world. It is a real sacrifice that has to be made. And the sacrifice will seem at first to frustrate its own end; but this is only in appearance, not in reality. According to the teaching of Jesus, the higher a man climbs in the scale of being, the more necessary, the more welcome will this sacrifice become. In all the loftiest religious systems of mankind the principle of self-renunciation has held a more or less important place. And Christianity solemnly claims for itself supremacy among religions when in its holy of holies it erects the Cross. But this cannot be done without large and willing assent from men. They have seen in the Cross the symbol of their salvation,

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the guarantee of eternal life. But the teaching of Jesus would take them further than this. To Him the Cross is not a mere means of escape from sin ; it is a way of life. Only in the discipline and culture of the Cross does man reach the perfect fruit of grace. He has there God revealed to him as eternally giving, communicating, sacrificing Himself. And he sees there opened out for him the way to the Divine. As Herder says : “What has close fellowship with God ever proved to man but a costly self-sacrificing service.” We cannot enter the threshold of the Divine life, or even take the Divine name upon our lips in sincerity, without being called to renounce ourselves. “Thy will be done” is the beginning and the end of the life of faith. And nowhere is this so strongly and beautifully manifested as in the life and death of Jesus Christ. For this reason He has been accepted everywhere as an example of a true humanity. The Cross of Christ is life, not theology or dogma ; and everywhere in the world’s history it has proved

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a reviving, stimulating force, a shower in a thirsty land. A few men strongly charged with the passion of the sacrifice of Jesus were able to renew the life of the decadent Empire of Rome. And to-day nothing so lifts a human life, fills it with high purpose and strong achievement, as fellowship in the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. This Christian ideal, which seems to the superficial mind mere effeminate asceticism, has proved that it can nerve the weakest of mankind to heroism, and build up characters as strong as steel. For “he that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”

3. THE DEEPER TEACHING OF THE PARABLE.

We must not evade the most important aspect of the subject. This sacrifice, which in man is the natural consequence of the work of Jesus Christ, was to Jesus Himself the supreme necessity of His position. He had to face the Cross in order to do the work

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for which He came into the world. This was necessary, not only for the development of His own person, but that He might become the Saviour of others. The beauty and ultimate beneficence of the law of self-sacrifice we can most of us admit, and yet only too often is the preaching of Christ crucified counted as a stumbling-block and foolishness. The reason for this is that we do not clearly distinguish between the purpose of Christ's life and that of ours. He came into the world, not to live just as other men do, but with a definite aim before Him. We cannot read the story as told in the Gospels without realising that the great redemptive object of His life was never absent from His consciousness. He spoke and acted and strove simply with the one end in view. His life has been called a calculated sacrifice. Death was not merely the inevitable and natural end of it. He lived to die. And His death was but the completion of a process of self-renunciation which began with His entrance into the world, and which was a necessary

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condition of His saving work. It needs no great insight to prove that in order truly to benefit the race He must needs enter into its life, and take upon Himself its burden. Through His suffering He becomes identified with our humanity. His sacrifice was on a scale and for a purpose so different from ours that no mere human analogies can sufficiently account for it. It represents a divine wealth of love, a renunciation immense, immeasurable, of which we may well be content to enter into the benefits, without seeking to probe all its depths or to understand its meaning.

We can perhaps best realise it through its results. As a field of wheat is the best justification of the farmer's action in dropping good seed into the ground to rot and die, so in the light of what it has accomplished we can read something of the power and fullness of the sacrifice of Christ. We cannot question the fruitfulness of the seed sown in the death of Jesus. For eighteen centuries the Christian Church has with one voice testified to this fact,

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that the Son of God was made flesh, and gave Himself as a ransom for many. Not all the many corruptions or rivalries of the Church have ever really silenced this testimony. It has been sometimes suppressed and sometimes concealed, but it has lived on in secret, shrined in men's hearts, biding its time. As it was preached at first it is preached still, and it is the one message which men seem to hear, and which touches and arouses them alike, amid all their differences of culture, temperament, and creed. And it is known by its fruits. Wherever it has found due entrance into human hearts, it has brought forth a harvest of repentance and self-sacrifice and godly living. In the passion of devout gratitude which it breathes into the soul, it supplies a motive for living well of the strongest kind. The sacrifice and service of a life in Christ are never forced, reluctant, or constrained. His yoke is easy, and His burden light. All that we do for Him grows out of our loving thankfulness for all that He has done for us. We can do no less

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than give ourselves, for it is all we have, and little enough at that. Love is the secret of the whole. We love Him because He first loved us.

Now we have here the purely practical side of the matter. And it may perhaps be thought that we are evading difficulties rather than helping to solve them. But the difficulties in question can only be solved by practice, by experience. From the point of view of mere theory, this doctrine of sacrifice, whether in regard to Christ or ourselves, is at best a hard saying which few can receive. But a man's heart does not stop beating because he cannot explain how it beats ; nor need ignorance of divine things prevent him from entering into the fullest experience of the love of Christ. "Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

"Where I am most perplexed, it may be there
Thou makest a secret chamber, holy, dim,
Where Thou wilt come to help my deepest prayer."

With love, as with God, all things are possible.

VIII

THE LIFE BEYOND

(John xi. 25)

IT is characteristic of the Fourth Evangelist that he should link the hope of immortality with the person of Jesus Christ, and the Christian Church has not been slow to follow his example. The life of which Christ is the source and guarantee to Christians is a life more abundant, not shut up within the narrow confines of time and of the flesh, but eternal in outlook and infinite in range. The Gospel makes no attempt to prove the immortality of the soul. The matter is regarded not so much as one for argumentation as for testimony. It belongs to that spiritual valuation of man which is an integral part of the Christian message. Man's nature is estimated in

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terms which justify the belief that “ he was not made to die,” and on that basis his whole destiny is shaped. For Christians nothing more is needed. Their faith in Christ is sufficient to enable them to accept His word on this great question. He has accomplished their salvation from sin and death, has brought life and immortality to light through His gospel, and they are content to say with Baxter :

“ My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim ;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him.”

And even those who cannot use this language, and have no such assurance of faith, may be well advised to follow the method indicated in the Gospels in dealing with the question of the future life. It is not a matter that can easily be settled by argument, and most of the old-fashioned “ proofs ” leave us cold. Even the modern investigations of psychical research, interesting as they are from the psychological point of view, have little or no religious value. It is not enough

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to suggest to men the possibility of survival. The bare fact has nothing in it of light or hope. For the Christian view of the future it is necessary to know that the life hereafter will be a better one than the life here, and that there is some moral link between the two. We have the assurance of this in Christ, who is Judge as well as Saviour; but we can prepare the way for it and support it by certain presumptions derived from our knowledge of the universe and of the nature of man, the cumulative effect of which is impressive.

I. AN INSTINCTIVE BELIEF.

In the first place, we have to reckon with the widespread nature of the belief in some form of survival after death. Investigation into the burial customs of primitive races has removed all doubt as to the instinctive character and almost universal sway of such beliefs. They tell us little or nothing as to the nature of the life beyond, but they testify with one voice to the fact of the

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belief. The most pious duty of the survivors is to prepare their friends for a new condition of existence. And we are justified in saying of this what we say of primitive religion generally, that it is native to man and represents the normal and natural working of the human consciousness. Therefore it is not to be put aside as a mere freak or aberration due to ignorance. It is an essential part of man's mental and moral equipment, has its work to do in the process of his development, and points to some reality with which it corresponds. If man is a sane creature and lives in a sane world, then, when he thinks he was not made to die, he is not being self-deceived.

Further, if we believe in the reasonableness of the universe, we shall believe not merely in the reasonableness of man's primitive instincts but of his most fundamental and characteristic demands. We have certain moral and religious needs for the expression and satisfaction of which the universe must provide or else be judged irrational. The belief in goodness, righteousness, and truth

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is not a delusion, any more than the belief of the mathematician that two and two invariably make four. We are as justified in asking that the universe shall answer our spiritual demands as he is in asking that it shall answer his intellectual demands. There are certain moral and spiritual values the conservation of which is as necessary in a rational universe as the conservation of those intellectual values on which both natural science and daily life depend. But these higher values are invariably the expression of personal activity, and the question then arises, whether their conservation is possible apart from that of the personalities which produce them. Here it does not seem sufficient to reply that men continue to live "in lives made better by their presence," that memory and influence constitute the only immortality that is possible or worth having, and that the craving for personal post-existence is a selfish and egotistic thing. This means that in the universe, as we know it, there is no room for the satisfaction or development of that in us

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which is best and highest. If our nature is to fulfil its bent, some wider opportunity than that afforded by this life must be provided for us. That we should welcome such an opportunity only shows that we have learned to place a true value on ourselves and on our destiny. While it is true that men survive in their achievements, they are never likely to be content with such survival. No personality is truly expressed in its actions, and the greater it is the wider is the sphere needed for its development. Only in a future such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard is there the chance of bringing the higher human values to fruition.

Reflections such as these are forced on us by the spectacle of young and promising lives cut off in their prime. If this universe represents a moral order, then there is no room in it for the kind of waste which such premature death seems to involve. The instinct that refuses to believe that the vast potentialities of these young lives will remain for ever unrealised is a true and right one. In a sane world men make

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things, not in order that they may be destroyed, but to fulfil a purpose and achieve an end. And shall God do less? If we are indeed made in His image and for the ends of His grace, then it is at least reasonable that we should have the opportunity of fulfilling our high destiny, if not here then hereafter.

2. A MORAL UNIVERSE.

At the same time, we have to reckon with the fact that the Judge of all the earth will do right. If this is a moral universe, then it will provide for the conservation of moral values. Justice will always be done in the long-run, and truth and righteousness will triumph. But it is obvious that in this present world this does not happen. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to religion is the moral spectacle which the universe presents to those who confine their observation to this life only. They are confronted by a vista of broken hopes, frustrated ambitions, and unfulfilled ideals. They see

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virtue suffering and wickedness prospering, and unless they can believe that the balance is redressed in some other sphere, they can come to no conclusion save that they are living in a universe which is as irrational as it is immoral. Even on the grand scale of history, where vision takes a wider sweep and range, the same general conclusion is inevitable apart from belief in a future which will at least make it possible to see justice done. In the long last men cannot be persuaded to deny their own moral nature, and they will not be content with a theory of the universe which does not satisfy their sense of right. They believe in judgment, in retribution, and in the great principle that "as a man sows, so shall he also reap." They therefore require that room shall be found in the scheme of things for the working out of this principle. They recognise that such room is not to be found in this present life, and so they accept the fact that God hath set eternity in our hearts, and that we are built on a scale which requires a more abundant life to complete it.

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In corroboration of their faith, it may be said, as John Stuart Mill used to argue, that wherever belief in the future has been strong and vivid, it has made for human progress. There is no doubt that the deterioration of religion and the more material views of life so prevalent just now are due to the loss of faith in the future. It is true that we can easily dispense with certain popular ideas of heaven, and of future reward and punishment. But the alternative to them is not the abandonment of the whole subject, but moralised and less materialistic conceptions. The Churches have undoubtedly suffered from their neglect of this question, and are now in a position to appreciate the truth of the Apostle's words, that "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Religion at any rate can never live or be effective within the narrow circle of time and sense. If it is to do its work, it must have room and scope for development, and this it can only find *sub specie eternitatis*. Man's search after God must remain a mockery unless

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there is a real hope that it can be fully and finally rewarded. But this is not possible here and now, when we see through a glass darkly. It only becomes possible then, when we see face to face.

All this, however, depends on the assumption that the universe is a realm of ends, that it is working out a best that is yet to be, and that it is reasonable. Such an assumption seems to be required by the very constitution of our human nature. Apart from it we have no assurance that things are what they seem, and without it neither science nor history were possible. If we are justified in making it, we have every right to trust our instincts and to believe that our best hopes and ideals are not mere will-o'-the-wisps, but have some reality to correspond to them. The future life, like the belief in God, is best treated as an hypothesis that is yet in process of verification. Experience is gradually making plain to us that only on the assumption of a future life does the life we now live become reasonable and tolerable, and offer any real satis-

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faction to our ideals. Man can never wholly forget that he is a spiritual being, and only on the understanding that he can find a spiritual environment can he reconcile himself to his lot. This again requires a wider range of opportunity than he can find in the world of time and sense alone.

3. A FINAL RATIFICATION.

Such considerations as these prepare the way for the full Christian message as to the life to come. To the Christian it is offered as a matter of faith rather than of the understanding, but it is none the less attractive because it appeals to and answers some of the deepest instincts of our nature. But in Christ the future is revealed with a fulness and glory that would be quite impossible to the unaided intuition. He is Himself the source and centre of that more abundant life to which He points His followers. It is a life hid with Him in God. It involves a communion with God far more complete

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and satisfying than is possible even to the most spiritual natures in this world. True, it depends on the degree of spiritual attainment which is reached here and now, and therefore there are in it grades and stages and possibilities of progress such as we can only dimly envisage. For many, no doubt, it will mean an experience of probation, and for all one of retribution. That men will reap the just reward of their deeds goes without saying, and that they will come to know the love of God which passeth knowledge is equally true. In the light of this faith we may be willing to leave unsolved many vexed questions on which we would gladly obtain more light. In Christ enough has been revealed for faith and hope, and the better part for us is not to indulge in vain and curious speculations, but so to live as that "the gates of the grave shall not prevail against us." On the basis of the philosophy, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," no sane, useful, or happy life is possible. Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the

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gospel, and so has made possible to men a hope that nothing can put to shame, and a patience that will endure to the end. As men learn to live "not unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again," so do they enter into that endless life of which God Himself is at once the source and the exceeding great reward.

Of this new life Jesus Christ is to the Christian both the ground and the guarantee. It is in such sense that we must interpret the words, "I am the resurrection and the life," and it is for this reason that the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel is a holy place for all those who seek assurance of things eternal and unseen. Here they find their deepest instincts satisfied and their brightest hopes confirmed. Jesus was one who "could not be holden of death." His life in and with the Father was not bound within the limits of time, and the life which He imparts to others is like unto His own. Just as men are accustomed to verify His teaching and claims by accepting

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them and submitting to them until they become a kind of second nature, so they may discover Him to be to them the power of an endless life by the extent to which their lives are hid with Him in God. The deeper our faith in Him, and the closer our communion with Him, the clearer will be our vision of the many mansions He has gone to prepare for His own. The moral range of the work of Christ in the human soul, His gifts of grace, forgiveness, and power, lift men at once on to the plane of the spiritual and fill their conception of life with a new and richer content. It is not that they are led merely to contemplate an endless vista of existence, but that the whole of life becomes so rich and full and satisfying that it necessarily reaches beyond the bounds of time and sense. Given this sure grasp of the things of the soul, and the unseen world takes on a new reality. Needs and aspirations too are aroused which cannot be satisfied save in a larger sphere than that of here and now. In this sense Christ brings life and immortality to light

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through His gospel, and those who live in and unto Him come to realise that the far future is their world always. "He came that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly."

APPENDIX

FOR the study of the Revised Version a Parallel Bible or New Testament is indispensable, and for those who know Greek the *Parallel New Testament, Greek and English* (with generous margins), published by the Oxford University Press, is specially recommended. The Cambridge University Press have issued a useful, though somewhat bulky, volume containing the Parallel New Testament interleaved with writing-paper for the use of students. All editions that do not contain the Revisers' *marginal* renderings should be carefully avoided.

Those who desire to trace more fully the history of the different English Versions should consult such well-known works on the English Bible as those by Professor Eadie (2 vols., London, 1876), by Dr. W. F. Moulton (revised edit., London, 1911), and

Appendix

(1) Marcus Dods' *St. John's Gospel*, in the "Expositor's Bible" (1894), a sane, practical, and homiletical exposition, full of spiritual insight and wise moderation. (2) E. F. Scott's *The Fourth Gospel* (1906), a vigorous and lucid discussion of the ideas, aims, and difficulties of the Gospel—sometimes erratic in its judgments but always concerned for the permanent significance of the work. (3) Prof. Percy Gardner's *The Ephesian Gospel* (1915), a most valuable survey of the subject from the modernist point of view, in which much light is thrown on the Gospel from the Ephesian atmosphere in which it had its birth. A most suggestive and reverent book. Finally, among the host of commentaries we would say a good word for that of John Calvin. He is one of the writers on the Scriptures who is never out of date, because he has so clear an eye for the spirit rather than the letter.

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